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Superintendent's BOOK OF PRAYER

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The Superintendent's BOOK OF PRAYER

BY

EDWARD LEIGH PELL

RICHMOND, VA.

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PREFACE.

This little volume is designed to aid, *first*, those superintendents who have not yet ventured to lead their Sunday-schools in prayer; and, *second*, those superintendents who are burdened with a sense of the sameness of their prayers, and who would value a book of prayer for the variety of topics and treatment which it might suggest in the preparation of their own prayers. It is not a contribution to devotional literature. It is not literature: to have aimed at literary excellence would have defeated its object. It is simply an effort to utter, in such language as one is apt to use in informal prayer, the deeper longings which well up from the heart of the average superintendent as he stands before his school.

PRAYERS

FOR USE IN

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS

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PRAYERS
FOR
OPENING EXERCISES

I.

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us this holy Sabbath day.

May the moments which we are now to spend together be very rich in blessing to everyone of us. May we find joy in doing our part in all the exercises of the hour. May we be glad to sing, and as glad to study our lesson that we may learn what God wants us to be and to do. Help us who are teachers to give of the best that is in us to our pupils, and help us who are pupils to honor our teachers. May we love one another, and may we love our school, and above all may we love thee. And when we go from this place may we be glad that we came, glad that we learned something of thy will, and glad that we may come again and learn more of thee and of thy love for us.

All these things we ask in the name of Him who taught us when we pray to say—

Our Father, etc.

2.

WE thank thee, our Father, for our Sunday-school, and for all the opportunities which it brings to us. We thank thee for all the good we have found here, for all the songs and prayers and lessons and kind words that have helped us here, for the sweet friendships that have been formed here, and for all the helpful things that have found their way into our lives through the years we have spent together here. Help us, our Father, to appreciate these blessed privileges more, and to show our appreciation by being more regular and prompt in our attendance, by studying our lessons more earnestly, by taking a more lively interest in our exercises, and by attending more faithfully to all the duties that are required of us. Bless us this hour in all that we may do and in every word that we may speak. May our hearts be open to all the hallowing influences of this place, and may we go to our homes desiring nothing so much as to be like Jesus our Savior, who gave himself for us and in whose name we have been taught to pray:

Our Father, etc.

3.

BREATHE upon us, O Holy Spirit, that all our thoughts and desires may be holy and acceptable to thee. May we be altogether prompted by thee in everything that we say and do. And all through this hour may the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep our hearts and minds—all of our hearts and minds—in the knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ his Son. May that peace come to the youngest as well as to the oldest among us. And may we all go from this house conscious that the Spirit of God is with us, and may we be guided by that Spirit through all the day and through all the days to come. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

4.

OUR FATHER, we have met in the name of thy dear Son. We are thy children; this day is thy day; this Word which we are to study is thy Word. Bless thine own this day we pray thee, O Lord. May we have grace to behave as thy children indeed. May we remember this Sabbath day to keep it holy. And may we be as deeply interested in the study of thy Word as if we could hear thee speak to us with thine own voice. And may all the hallowing influences of this place find their way into our hearts and prove a lasting blessing to every one of us. Bless our Sunday-school, our officers, our teachers, our pupils, and prosper everything we try to do in Jesus' name. And, Lord, help us not to attempt to do anything in our School which cannot be done in Jesus' name. May all things be done as in his sight and for his glory. We ask these things in his own name.

Our Father, etc.

5.

OUR FATHER, we are glad that we can come together here in this pleasant place away from the noise of the world, and spend a little while thinking of thee and of what thou wouldst have us do. Empty our minds, we pray thee, of the things we have been thinking about during the week, and help us to fix our thoughts upon thee. Empty our hearts of the things that are contrary to thy will, and help us to fix our affections upon thee. And may there come to us to-day a new thought of God—a precious thought that will abide in our minds all through the week—a thought that will make us better—better men and better women, better boys and better girls. Bless us as we study our lesson together. May the hearts of our teachers burn with love for our pupils, and may our pupils love and honor our teachers, and may we teach and may we learn remembering that Jesus our Teacher is looking upon us with loving interest in all we do in his name.

Our Father, etc.

6.

OUR FATHER, we thank thee for the love that hath kept us through the week, and hath brought us safely together again. We pray that we may be conscious of thy love this hour, and that thy love for us may awaken in our hearts a deeper love for thee and a deeper love for one another. Help us to remember that God is love, and that it is the privilege of his people to love more, and to be more lovable and more lovely than other people. May it be our daily business and our chief joy to love one another and to love thee. May we love our Sunday-school because it is the school in which we are taught to love thee. May we love our Bible because it is the book in which we are taught to love thee. May we love one another because we are children of the same Father and therefore owe to one another the love of brothers and sisters.

These things we ask in the name of Jesus our Savior.

Our Father, etc.

7.

WE present ourselves before thee, O Lord, craving thy blessing. Here are little children who every moment need thy tender care. Put thine arm around them, we pray thee, and may not one of them ever leave thy loving embrace. Here are strong boys and girls who are so prone to trust in their own strength. Teach them rather to lean upon thee, and to use the strength which thou hast given them for thy glory. Here are young men and women who need continually the guidance of thy Holy Spirit. Keep their feet, O God, and may they never wander from the path of truth and right. And here are older men and women who are conscious that they need everything from thee, and are crying unto thee. Lord hear them. Hear all our cries, and give to each of us the blessing that we need this day. And when we go from this house grant that we may go in thy strength, with hearts filled anew with thy love. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

8.

O LORD, from whom all holy desires come, awaken in our hearts a deeper longing to know thy holy will. May it be our chief concern to learn just what thou wouldst have us be, in order that we may so live as to please thee. And may we not forget that it is in thy Holy Book—in these lessons which we study from Sabbath to Sabbath—that we are to find thy will concerning us. If thou shouldst come into this place so that we could see thee with our eyes, and shouldst speak to us with thy voice so that we could hear thee with our ears, how anxious we would be to catch every word that might fall from thy lips! Help us, Lord, to realize that in these lessons thou dost really come to us and speak to us. And may we study our lessons with all the earnestness with which we would listen to thy voice. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

9.

OUR FATHER, may every moment of this glad hour be rich in blessing for every one of us. May our minds be open to thy Word, may our hearts be open to thy Spirit, and may we yield ourselves wholly up to thee to be used by thee according to thy holy will. Keep us this day from all sin. May we not do anything which thou wouldst not have us do, or speak one word which thou wouldst not have us speak, or think one thought which thou wouldst not have us think. May we be wholly guided by thee in all things. Bless us while we sing and pray, bless us while we teach and learn; and may thy blessing go with us from this place, so that when we go to our homes we may have strength to put into practice the lessons we have learned.

All this we ask in the name of Him who taught us to say,

Our Father, etc.

10.

BLESSED SAVIOR, we know that thou art interested in us and in our School, and we come to thee confident that thou wilt hear our prayer. We feel the need of greater earnestness in our work. Help us who are officers to realize the great possibilities of our School, and to plan and work and pray for greater things. Help us who are teachers to realize that there is no work so noble as the molding of a young life in the image of thy dear Son, and may we give ourselves more earnestly to our teaching than ever before. Help us who are pupils to realize that there is nothing so important to us just now as to learn what God would have us be and do, and may we study our lessons more faithfully than ever before. And grant, Lord, that from this day we may all—officers, teachers and pupils—work together for the upbuilding of our School so that its influence may spread until every man and woman and boy and girl who ought to be here shall come to enjoy its benefits.

Our Father, etc.

II.

OUR FATHER, we pray thee to make our Sunday-school a school of faith—a school in which we shall learn of thee so well that we cannot help trusting thee. Help us who are teachers to remember that our faith in God is according to our knowledge of God, and help us to hasten to fill the minds of our pupils with the knowledge of God that they may never doubt him. Forbid Lord that anyone should go out from this school doubting thee, but may our boys and girls grow in faith as they grow in years, and may they all become shining examples of simple trust in the Lord Jesus. All we ask in his dear name.

Our Father, etc.

12.

OUR FATHER, we come to thee humbly confessing our sins. During the past week we have wandered from thee—many of us—like sheep lost upon the mountains. We have followed our own desires rather than thy holy will. We have thought of what we wanted to do, and have seldom stopped to think what thou wouldst have us do. We have disobeyed thee in many things. We have left undone many things which we ought to have done, and have done many things which we ought not to have done. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, O merciful God, for the sake of thy dear Son, and blot out all our sins. And so cleanse our hearts by the inspiration of thy Spirit that we may never more wander from thee, but may henceforth walk according to thy holy Commandments.

Our Father, etc.

13.

LORD, we have come together in this pleasant place to learn of thee and of our duty to thee and to one another. We pray that our minds may be wholly under thy guidance this hour—that we may be kept from all unworthy thoughts, and that we may be able to understand clearly all that may be taught us or all that we may try to teach. May we find it a delight to think of God and of all that he has done for us, and of all that we ought to do for him. Help us to make the most of our lesson hour. May we be so deeply interested in our work as teachers that we will not have a moment to spare from the lesson for other things. May we be so deeply interested in the lesson as pupils that we will not care to think of other things. And may the lesson yield some precious truth for each of us that will find its way into our hearts and that will help us to live nearer to thee.

Look upon us in mercy, O Lord, and forgive our sins and give us thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

14.

VERY gracious hast thou been to us through the past week, O God, and this new Sabbath finds us surrounded by thy mercies. What would our lives be without thy lovingkindness, O God! We pray that all through this holy day our hearts may be kept very tender with the thought of thy goodness to us. May we give thanks unto the Lord, because he is good and his mercy endureth forever. May our songs this hour be full of gladness because of the gratitude of our hearts.

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.

Our Father, etc.

15.

OUR FATHER, we are not worthy to come into thy presence; but we know that thou art glad to have us come, else thou wouldst not have given thy beloved Son to die for us. There is so much, Lord, that we need, and there is no one to whom we can go but to thee. We want our sins forgiven. We have done wrong many times during the past week—thou knowest all about it—and we are sorry. We want to be cleansed and filled with thy Spirit so that we may be kept from sin. O, cleanse our hearts and take complete possession of us so that where there has been hate there may be love, where there has been selfishness there may be generosity, where there has been bitterness there may be kindness. And continue, we beseech thee, thy work in our hearts until thou hast molded us in the image of thy dear Son, our blessed example.

All we ask in his dear name.

Our Father, etc.

16.

WE thank thee, O Lord, for this day and this hour. We thank thee for life and health, for friends and loved ones, for our Church and Sunday-school, and above all for our blessed Savior through whom all these blessings have come to us. Help us, Lord, to show how thankful we are for our lives by living as thou wouldst have us live; for our friends and loved ones by treating them as friends and loved ones; for this day by remembering to keep it holy; for our Church and Sunday-school by entering heartily into all the services of thy house. And help us to show how thankful we are for our blessed Savior by obeying his commandments, by living close to him, by walking continually in his footsteps. All these things we ask in his dear name.

Our Father, etc.

17.

BE very gracious to us, our Father, this hour and bless us in all that we do in the name of thy Son. Empty our minds of every unholy thought; empty our hearts of every unholy desire, and fill us with thy Holy Spirit, that all our thoughts and desires, our words and deeds, may be pleasing to thee. May it be our delight to do our duty in all things this day. Help us who are pupils to be earnest, attentive, orderly, and quick to respond to every request. Help us who are teachers to be patient, loving, kind, zealous, full of the spirit of Christ, and burning with desire to mold our pupils in his image. And help us who are officers to be diligent and faithful in every duty. Bless our School this day we pray thee, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

18.

OUR FATHER, who art always more ready to give than we are to ask, pour upon us this day such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. May we have such a revelation of thy love that our lips shall overflow with praise all the day long. Here in our Sunday-school may we serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with singing. May we remember that it is our privilege to be happy wherever we are; and at all times and in all things may we rejoice and give thanks unto the Lord. For he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.

Our Father, etc.

19.

LORD, we remember that when thy people gathered themselves together to ask help of thee, and stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives and their children, and cried unto thee, thou didst hear them and answer their prayer. Even so, Lord, we thy people—men and women, youths and maidens and little children—would come before thee and lift up our cry unto thee; for we know that thou wilt answer us even as thou didst answer Judah of old. Hear us, Lord, for ourselves and our loved ones, and for all for whom we should pray. Bless our Sunday-school, that it may be a blessing to us. Bless our pastor, our officers, our teachers, our pupils. [Bless the teacher who is kept away to-day by sickness.] Remember the pupils whose places are vacant to-day. Bless those among us who are in trouble of any sort. Look with pity upon those pupils who do not feel it worth while to study their lessons, and help them to realize how they are thus turning their backs upon their Heavenly Father. Bless us all, O Lord, according to our several needs, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

20.

JESUS, thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou fount of life, thou light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to thee again.

There is no love like thy love; no peace like thy peace; no joy like the joy which comes from the consciousness that thou hast accepted us. Receive us, O Lord, forgive our sins, and call us thy own again. And may we from this moment live as thy own. May we walk in thy footsteps. May we be meek and lowly and kind and merciful, and patient and considerate, and may we always be about our Father's business. May we so live that all around us will know that we are thy friends.

Our Father, etc.

21.

VERY gracious hast thou been to us during the past week, O God, and this Sabbath finds us crowned with thy lovingkindness. How can we thank thee enough for thy mercies! Help us to remember that if we cannot find words to express our gratitude we may yet express what we feel in grateful deeds. And all through this day may we do the things that please thee. Help us to keep thy commandments. Help us to be kind toward one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. Bless all the members of our school—those who are here and those who are kept away. If there are any sick make them well. If there are any in sorrow wipe away their tears. If there are any burdened take the weariness out of their hearts. And may everyone of us have a blessing from thee this day according to each individual need. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

22.

WE thank thee, Our Father, for the holy Sabbath day which thou hast set in between the busy weeks to turn our thoughts from the things of the world to the things of God. How soon would we forget thee, O Lord, but for thy Sabbaths! We thank thee for every Sabbath day that brings to us the thought of God. May this holy day be the best Sabbath we have ever spent. May we delight in studying thy word, in attending upon all the services of thy church, and in every good word and deed. May we find rest this day in doing our Father's will.

Now, Father, fix our thoughts upon the lesson we are about to study. May we open the Book with an earnest desire to find therein some precious truth that may be helpful to us in our daily life. And may we find that precious truth, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

23.

O MERCIFUL FATHER, we give thee hearty thanks for all thy goodness and lovingkindness to us. It is to thee, O Lord, that we owe all that we have. Thou didst give us our lives. Thou hast kept our hearts beating, and hast given us our food and clothing and all that we have needed. Thou didst give us thy dear Son to die for us that we might live; and thou hast given us our Sabbaths, our Bible, our Church and Sunday-school that we might have abundant opportunity to learn how to walk in his footsteps. Lord, what shall we render unto thee for all thy goodness to us? Shall we not give ourselves to thee? Master, help us. At this moment we would lay ourselves upon thy altar. We offer ourselves as our thankoffering, Lord; accept us—all that we have and all that we are—accept us and use us for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

24.

BE very gracious to us this hour, O Lord, and may every moment that we shall spend together be precious in thy sight. May our songs bring us joy, may our lessons bring us light, may our talks with one another draw us nearer together and nearer to thee, and may all that we do be pleasing to thee and helpful to those around us. May we love our Sunday-school more and more. May we be faithful in our duties as teachers and pupils. May we delight in being regular and prompt, and may the interest we take in our work be an inspiration to all within our reach. Help us who are teachers to be faithful to our pupils, and help us who are pupils to love our teachers, and to love the Word which we shall learn from their lips. And as we study our lessons may we be filled with holy aspirations. May we long to do better and be better, and may we have grace from thee to do better and be better, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

25.

LORD, look very tenderly upon us, we pray thee, and blot out all of our sins. Cleanse our hearts and make room for thy blessed Spirit, that he may take possession of us and use us for thy glory. Bless us as members of this school. May each of us be a blessing to the school and may the school be a blessing to each of us. Fill our teachers with holy ambition, and may they not be satisfied if their pupils are not growing up in the image of Christ. And create in our pupils an intense desire to know the will of God, so that they will study their lessons not merely that they may recite them, but that they may learn what God would have them do. Bless all of us who are here to-day and graciously remember those pupils and teachers who for any reason are kept at home. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

26.

BLESSED LORD, who hast taught us that without thy help it is impossible to please thee, guide us by thy Holy Spirit that all that we do this hour may be acceptable in thy sight. May we realize what a terrible thing it is to do those things which we know are displeasing to thee, and may it be our ambition to win thy approving smile. Help us to use our opportunities faithfully. May we accept each golden moment as a gift from thee to be used for thy glory. Here are sixty minutes in which we may sing and pray and study the lessons which teach us thy holy will. Help us, Lord, to make the most of every one of them, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

27.

OUR FATHER, we thank thee that thou hast not left us to grope our way through life in the dark alone, but, that thou hast given us thy Holy Word as a guide-book to point out the way, and thy Holy Spirit to help us use this guide-book aright. We thank thee for our Sunday-school in which we come together to study this guide-book so that we may learn the way of life. O Father, grant that we may love thy Word more and more, and may we love our Sunday-school for the opportunities which it gives us to learn its meaning. And may we love those who study this Word with us, and especially those who teach it to us. Bless us as we open this Book this hour. May a great light fall from above upon its pages, and may we learn some precious truth that will abide in our hearts and help us to walk as thou wouldst have us walk. Hear us for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

28.

UNTO THEE, O Lord, do we lift up our hearts. Hear us when we cry unto thee for in thee do we put our trust. Thou art the God of our salvation. Remember not our sins but rather remember us according to thy loving kindness and thy tender mercies, and blot out our sins. Cleanse our hearts and fill us with thy Holy Spirit. Teach us thy way and make plain our path before thee. And may we walk in thy way all the days of our lives. Bless us this hour, Lord, and may all the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

Our Father, etc.

29.

LORD, we present ourselves before thee to offer ourselves for thy service. We are thy children but we want to be useful children. O take possession of us and use us for thy glory. Take our hearts and fill them full of love for thee, that we may find ways to serve thee. Take from us all unholy desires that there may be room in our hearts for high and holy aspirations. Take our minds and rid them of all unworthy thoughts, and whatsoever things are honest and just and pure and lovely and of good report, help us to think on these things. Take our lips and cleanse them from all bitterness, all harshness, all uncharitableness; and teach them to speak words of love, of tenderness, of courtesy, of kindness. Take our hands and make them strong and tender and warm for the work that thou mayst give us to do. Take our feet and keep them out of every evil path and make them swift to run on errands of love for thee. O take us as we are, and make us what we ought to be, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

30.

LOOK very tenderly upon us this day, O Lord, and make us happy with the consciousness of thy love; and may our hearts overflow with love for thee and for one another. Take all sin out of our hearts; take all disturbing thoughts out of our minds; and may we enter upon the study of our lesson with the single desire to learn more about thee and about what thou wouldst have us be and do. And, Father, grant that we may this day learn something that will help us to be better than we have ever been before—something that will increase our faith, something that will cause us to love thee more and obey thee more perfectly. Bless our school, our officers, our teachers, our pupils, those who are present and those who are absent, and especially those who are kept at home by sickness or other affliction. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

31.

OUR FATHER, we give thee hearty thanks for thy loving care over us during the past week. Every day and every hour thou didst hover over us to protect us from danger, and to supply our every want. Help us to realize how entirely dependent upon thee we are for every moment we have, and may we learn to look upon the passing moments as so many golden gifts from God. Help us especially to appreciate the hours we spend together here in our Sunday-school. May we learn to love our School more and more as the gift of thy love, and because of the opportunities it gives us to learn more of thy love. Bless every one connected with our School—our pastor, our officers, our teachers, our pupils, and our mothers and fathers at home who are interested in our work. And remember, we beseech thee, those of our boys and girls who have been kept at home by sickness or trouble of any sort. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

32.

HOLY SPIRIT, from whom all holy thoughts proceed, take possession of our minds we pray thee, and teach us to turn our thoughts continually toward thee. May our first thought when we awake in the morning be of God; may our last conscious thought at night be of God; and all through the day, however busy or full of play our minds may be, may we often turn to think of thee. Forbid that we should allow our minds to be so full of other things that we would have to confess with shame at the close of the day that we had forgotten thee. And, Lord, forbid that during this hour which we are now to spend together we should allow our minds to wander from thee. Hear us, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

33.

WE will praise thee, O Lord, with all our hearts. We will be glad and rejoice in thee. For thou hast crowded our lives with blessings and thy mercies are more than the hairs of our heads. We praise thee for life, for all its opportunities, its comforts, its innocent pleasures, its blessed experiences. We praise thee for our Church and Sunday-school, for our Bible—for all the opportunities which thou hast given us to learn of thee. And above all we praise thee for the gift of thy dear Son, our Savior and Friend. Help us this day, O Lord, to praise thee with our lives as well as with our lips. May we show our gratitude to thee by living as thou wouldst have us live and by being faithful to thee in all things. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

34.

SPIRIT Divine attend our prayer,
And make our hearts thy home;
Descend with all thy gracious power,
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

O Blessed Master, we open our hearts to thy Spirit. We are not worthy that thou shouldst dwell in us, but thou hast made us for thy dwelling place and thou wilt come to us if we will make room for thy throne. O, take possession of us and cleanse us. Take possession of us and use us. And so guide us, Lord, we pray, that all our thoughts and words and deeds may be acceptable to thee. May we all from this moment do all things under the impulse of thy blessed Spirit. May every thought we think come from thee. May every desire of our hearts be inspired by thee. May every word that falls from our lips be prompted by thee. Take us, Lord, as we are and make us what we ought to be, and use us as thou wilt in all things. All these things we ask in the name of thy dear Son.

Our Father, etc.

35.

AS little children gather around a father's knee, seeking a father's forgiveness and a father's blessing, so we come to thee, our Father which art in heaven. We know that we are not worthy to be called thy children, but we remember that thou didst so love us as to give thy only Son to die for us, and we are not afraid to come to thee and call thee Father. O Father, put thine arm around us and tell us thou hast forgiven us, that we may look up into thy face. And help us, Lord, from this moment never to forget whose children we are and whose name we bear, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

36.

OUR FATHER, help us to enter upon the exercises of this hour with great earnestness, remembering that enthusiasm is essential to everything that calls for the best that is within us. And help us to feel that our Sunday-school *does* call for the best that is within us, and may we do our best every moment of the precious time that has been set apart for this work. May we realize that when we waste one of these golden moments we cast away a precious gift of thy love. But, Lord, while we would be deeply in earnest we would not be impatient. Help us to demand great things of ourselves and then we shall not easily grow discouraged at the shortcomings of others. Help our teachers to fall deeply in love with the truths they are teaching. Help them to bind their pupils to their hearts that they may bind them to Christ. And help our pupils to love their teachers and to love the truth that is taught them; and may they remember that if they cannot all be brilliant pupils they can all make their lives fragrant. Help us all, O Lord, to follow the ways of peace, and to cultivate with diligence the art of be-

ing kind. And may everyone of us learn to follow in the Masters' footsteps, for his own dear sake.

Our Father, etc.

37.

OUR FATHER, we pray thee to put into our hearts a great hunger for the knowledge of God. Help us to realize that if we would love thee more and serve thee better we must know thee better. So often we have sat complaining of the coldness of our hearts and wishing that something would happen to make us love thee better, and meanwhile we have neglected the quiet moments and the open Bible and our Sunday-school lessons and every other means by which men are brought face to face with God. So often we have insulted thee by asking thee to help us to love thee better when we have made no effort to know thee better. Forgive us, O Lord, and help us to remember that so long as we neglect our opportunities to learn of thee so long may we look for our hearts to be cold and indifferent to thee. And God forbid that we should ever again neglect a single opportunity we may have to learn of thee.

Our Father, etc.

38.

OUR FATHER, we pray thee to help us to realize that there is nothing which we need to cultivate more than the thought of God; that there is nothing that will make us better or happier than the thought of God; that there is nothing that will give us so much strength as a continual consciousness of God. Help us to remember that the less we think of thee the farther will we wander away from thee, and the more we think of thee the nearer will we come to thee, the stronger will be the thought of thee, the stronger will we be able to work for thee, the stronger will we be able to live for thee. And that we may think of thee more and more help us, we pray thee, to be more earnest students of thy Word which tells of thee. Help us to treasure our Sunday-school lessons as so many pictures in which we may have a new glimpse of God. This we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

39.

BLESSED SAVIOR, we look to thee as our best friend. We know that thou dost love us better than we love ourselves, and we know that thou hast power to do all for us that thy love may prompt thee to do. And we know also that if we will put ourselves wholly into thy hands thou wilt pour out upon us such a blessing as there will not be room to receive it. Help us, O blessed Master, this hour to give ourselves to thee. Help us to lay all that we have and all that we are upon thy altar. And then, Lord, accept us—accept us just as we are, and cleanse our hearts and make us what we ought to be. And through this day and through all the days to come may we remember that we are no longer our own; and whatever we do may we not forget whose we are and whom we serve.

Our Father, etc.

40.

BLESSED MASTER, we pray thee to help us to take our Sunday-school work seriously. So often we are tempted to think of it as a light thing, hardly worthy of our time and talents. Yet, Lord, in our serious moments we know that the most important thing those of us who are children can do is to study to know thy will that we may do it, and that the greatest work those of us who are teachers can do is to teach a child thy holy will. And help us to remember that this work ought to be done better than any other work in the world. And, Lord, we beseech thee to awaken in us a strong determination to make our Sunday-school as great in its achievements as it has been in its possibilities. And may we find no time too precious, no effort too great, to give to this work to which thou hast called us. All these things we ask in the name of thy dear Son.

Our Father, etc.

41.

BLESSED SAVIOR, thou who hast said "if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink," we come to take thee at thy word. Thou knowest the unsatisfied cravings of our hearts, and thou knowest that some of us have gone in every direction seeking some fountain at which we might quench our thirst except to Jesus. We have gone in quest of pleasure and have come back surfeited but not satisfied. And in our serious moments we have remembered how the great men of the earth from the beginning of time have drunk of every cup known to man and still have found nothing to quench the thirst of their souls. Yet, Lord, many of us continue to seek happiness everywhere except from thee. O help us this moment to believe with all our hearts that thou and thou alone canst satisfy the deeper cravings of our hearts. Lord, we do believe thee. Put thy Spirit within our hearts and satisfy us, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

42.

SAFELY through another week, Father, thou hast brought us on our way, and we come to thank thee. Each day thou hast thought of us when we did not think of ourselves. Each night thou hast kept us when we could not keep ourselves. And thou hast given us all things according to our needs. And now thou hast brought us to another day—another gift of thy love—a day in which we shall find it easy to think of thee. Help us, Lord, to make the most of the precious opportunities of this holy day. Help us to begin now to think more and more of God and of his will concerning us, remembering that the more we think of thee the less we will think of the things that are contrary to thy will. Bless our School—our pastor, our officers, our teachers, our pupils, any who are sick or in trouble—and finally save us all together in thy kingdom, we pray, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

43.

OUR FATHER, we come to ask for thy blessing upon our Sunday-school, that it may be a greater blessing to us than it has ever been in the past. While we are grateful for all that has been accomplished we know that it is little in comparison with what might have been done, and we are longing to see greater things. We want our School to be a greater power for good in our community than it has ever been. We want to see its influence extended to homes which we have not yet reached. We want to see all our teachers giving themselves with new zeal to their work. Above all we want to see our pupils saved. Lord, there are so many among us who have been learning about Christ for years and yet have never given their hearts to him. O Holy Spirit, awaken in us a great hunger for souls; and may we not be satisfied until every one of our pupils has accepted Jesus as his Savior and Lord. We ask it in his own name.

Our Father, etc.

44.

LORD, thou hast done so much for us and we have done so little for thee. We want to be useful servants. We want to show our gratitude by our deeds as well as by our lips. We have wished so often for an opportunity to do some great thing for thee, and we have waited idly for the opportunity and it has not come. And now we have come to realize that during all this precious time we have wasted we might have given many a cup of cold water in thy name. Help us, Lord, not to despise the day of small things, and to leave no kind deed undone while waiting for an opportunity to do a greater deed. Teach us how to give a cup of cold water in Jesus' name. Help us to quench somebody's thirst. Help us to satisfy somebody's longings. Help us to cool some weary brow. Help us to bathe the temples of the faint. Help us to refresh somebody who is weary. Help us to do now the thing that needs to be done now, we beg for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

45.

OUR FATHER, thou art nearer to us than our secret thoughts. Thou knowest the best and the worst that is within us. Thou art acquainted with all our ways. Thou knowest us better than we know ourselves, and thou canst tell us what we need better than we can tell thee. O gracious Lord, bless us this day, we pray, not according to our asking, but according to our real wants as thou seest them. If we ask for the things we should not have, do not grant them; if we fail to ask for the things thou wouldst give us, be gracious unto us and withhold them not from us. And grant, Lord, that whatever thou mayest give or withhold, we may recognize thy wisdom and love, and continue to praise thee out of grateful hearts. These things we ask in the name of thy dear Son.

Our Father, etc.

46.

STRONG SON OF GOD, immortal Love, we pray thee to strengthen our hearts with thy love that our hands may be strong for thy service. We realize that many an arm is weak simply because it has never been raised for the right; that many feet are too tender for the ground because they have not been running to carry help to the needy; that many a heart throbs faintly because it has not been exercised with sympathy and mercy. Help us to remember that if we would be strong we must not only feed upon thee, Lord, but we must go and obey thy word. And, Lord, help us—whatever our hands find to do, to do it with our might; for only thus shall we save ourselves from blight. May our boys grow up strong to resist temptation. May our girls grow up stronger than all the influences that may tempt them aside from the path of right. Make us all strong, Lord—strong to obey, strong to endure, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

47.

OUR FATHER, who art the protector of the weak, we pray thee to keep us from every hurtful thing. Deliver us from selfishness, the canker of so many souls. Deliver us from false pride. Deliver us from the "don't care" spirit. Deliver us from doubt. How can we doubt thee when thou hast been so faithful to us? How can we doubt thy word when thou hast kept every promise that thou hast made? How can we doubt thy love when there has never been a moment since our birth when we were not surrounded by thy lovingkindness? Help us to remember these things that we may never doubt thee. And, Lord, keep us from sin. Help us to realize what a terrible thing it is to sin against God—to use our lips or hands or minds or hearts in disobeying him to whom we owe all that we have and all that we are. Save us from sin, O Lord, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, etc.

48.

BLESSED LORD, grant us thy grace that we may love to do the things that thou dost command us to do. May we love to keep the Sabbath day holy. May we love to come to thy house to worship thee. May we find no hour so sweet "as that which calls us to thy feet." And may we love to study our lessons because they are from thy Word; because they tell us about thee and about thy will concerning us. May we love to work. May we love to do our duty in all things. May we love to be diligent. May we love to be helpful.

> Make us of one heart and mind,
> Courteous, pitiful and kind,
> Lowly, meek in thought and word,
> Altogether like our Lord.

All we ask in his dear name.
Our Father, etc.

49.

DEAR LORD, who hast promised help for every time of need, grant us thy grace that we may be able to overcome temptation and keep thy commandments. Time and again we have trusted in our own strength to resist temptation and we have failed. Time and again we have tried to obey thy will but our resolution aided us not. Unless thou wilt come to our aid we are undone. O, put thy Spirit into our hearts that we may live by thy strength and be delivered from all sin. Lord, hear our cry. Hear the prayers of these boys and girls who want to obey thee but who find it so easy to forget thy law. Hear these young men and women who know the meaning of temptation and who earnestly desire to be delivered from evil. Hear the prayers of these older men and women who long ago learned the strength of the tempter and the weakness of unaided human nature, and who realize that thou art their only hope. Hear us all, O Lord, and put thy Spirit within us and save us. We ask all these things in the name of thy dear Son.

Our Father, etc.

50.

"GOD of love that hearest prayer" hear us for our school this day. Give to our officers such earnestness of purpose as will make them strong for every duty. Help our teachers to remember that while the most serious business of life is living, the next most serious business is teaching others how to live, and may they give themselves with new earnestness to their high calling. Put into the hearts of our pupils a great hunger for thy Word, so that they will find the study of their lessons an increasing delight. And, Lord, may they not study in vain. May our boys and girls receive the truth in their hearts and grow up to be manly men—manly like the Man of Galilee. May our girls grow up to be noble, consecrated women whose adorning shall be "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price." And grant, Lord, that we may all be so faithful to thee that we may become at last an unbroken circle around thy throne in heaven.

Our Father, etc.

L. of C.

51.

O LORD our Teacher, we pray for thy blessing this day upon those who have been called to teach in this Sunday-school. Help them to realize what a momentous business it is to point out to precious souls the way of life. Help them to look well to their motives that they may aim at nothing short of the salvation of each and every pupil. Forbid that any one of them should be interested in the trifles which make a Sunday-school appear great to the neglect of that work which makes a Sunday-school really great. And may they give themselves with all their strength to this great work. May they never weary of giving to their pupils the best that is within them, remembering that the fountain of the heart cannot be kept fresh and sweet without constant giving. And may they give of their sympathy and their love as well as of their knowledge. Bless their pupils, O Lord, and may they so develop in all the Christian graces that their lives may be a source of unceasing joy to their teachers.

Our Father, etc.

52.

LORD, before we open this Holy Book to begin our lesson, help us to ask ourselves in all earnestness whether we are willing and ready and anxious to do all that we shall therein learn is our duty to do. We know that many of us are willing to do those things which accord with our notion of what the Bible means, and we know that many of us are ready to do those things which do not cut squarely across the grain of our own wishes; but, Lord, are we ready to do the things which this Book commands? O help us this moment to say in our hearts, What I find required of me in this thy Word, Lord, however hard or unreasonable it may appear, that will I believe and that will I do. And may we always approach the study of our lesson in this spirit. These things we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

53.

RALLY DAY.

OUR FATHER, we thank thee for the love that hath kept us in all our wanderings this summer and hath brought us safely back again, full of enthusiasm and strength for the work of another year. Help us, Lord, to resolve this day to be better and to do better than we did during the past year. May we who are officers push our work as a privilege and not allow it to rest upon us as a burden. May we who are teachers give ourselves to teaching rather than to entertainment. May we seek to win our pupils to ourselves that we may win them to Christ. May we study our pupils as well as our lessons. May we pray for our pupils each day, and may we not despair of loving the unlovable or teaching the unteachable. May we who are pupils resolve to be more faithful in the preparation of our lessons than we were last year. May it be our delight to be regular and prompt in attendance. May it be our delight to uphold the plans of our teachers. May it be our delight to do our part in everything that is expected of pupils.

Lord, we have now turned a new leaf.

What shall we do with this white page this new year? Shall we disfigure it with smears and blots at the top and then with tear stains at the bottom? What shall we make of this new year? A mere gap in the calendar? An idle stool of repentance? O help us this day to form a clearly defined purpose of what we are going to do with this great opportunity which God, out of the abundance of his love, has opened up before us. And then, Lord, may we have strength to go and do what we have planned to do. All these things we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

54.

CHRISTMAS.

GLORY to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. We bless thee, we praise thee, we worship thee, we magnify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. Our hearts swell with gratitude to thee, O God, for the world's great Christmas gift that came from the Father—the blessed Savior whose birthday we celebrate. O help us everyone to open our hearts to him this day, and to recognize him as our King and our Lord whose will it shall be our joy to obey. And may we think of him to-day until he shall become so real to us that we can almost see him with our eyes, and feel the breath of his love upon our faces. And may we have a new vision of his love that will bind our hearts to him forever. All glory be to thee, O Christ, our blessed Redeemer!

Our Father, etc.

55.

DECISION DAY.

OUR FATHER, our hearts swell with gratitude when we remember how many precious opportunities thou hast given us in this place to learn of thy dear Son. But, Lord, our hearts are saddened when we remember that while we have been learning of Jesus Sunday after Sunday, month after month, year after year, so many in this Sunday-school have never learned to believe in him. They believe him—they have never thought of doubting his Word—but they have never believed *in* him—they have never accepted him as their Savior. They have learned about him as they have learned about Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon, and they have never allowed him to be anything more to them than Alexander or Cæsar or Napoleon has been to them. Lord, help them to see how they have wronged thee and to turn to Jesus this day. Help these boys to look to him who, while yet a little boy, was about his Father's business; and may they accept him as their Savior to-day. Help these little girls to look to him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me and

forbid them not"; and may they come unto him. Help these young men and young women to look to him who while yet a young man died to save the world; and may they come to him. And may every unsaved one in our school come to the Lord this day, we ask, in his own name.

Our Father, etc.

56.

EASTER.

WE praise thee, O God, for the Son of thy love. We praise thee, O Christ, that thou didst come into the world to die for us and that thou didst rise again. We praise thee for the blessed thought that comes to us this glad day that if thou art risen from the dead—as thou art—then thou hast power over death; then the grave hath lost its victory. Help us to realize that if thou art risen then thou art alive to-day; that if thou art alive then thou art near to everyone of us; that if thou art near to us then thou art sympathizing with us; that if thou dost sympathize with us then we may be assured that all our needs shall

be supplied and we shall be finally satisfied. Thou art risen! then thou art the Son of God. Thou art risen! then thou dost live to fulfil thy promises. Thou art risen! then we shall rise again. And now that thou art risen—

> O Jesus, ever with us stay,
> Make all our moments calm and bright,
> Chase the dark night of sin away,
> Shed o'er the world thy holy light.

Our Father, etc.

57.

PROMOTION DAY.

OUR FATHER, we have come together to take account of the work of the year—to see what we have accomplished, and to recognize those who have been faithful. We thank thee for all the good work our pupils have done during the year. We thank thee for those who have won their promotion by their faithfulness. We thank thee especially for those who have been most diligent in their studies and most faithful to perform all the duties expected of them. Help them to understand this day, O Lord, that the greatest reward one can receive

in this life is the privilege of being more diligent and more faithful in a greater work, and may they go to their new places in the school determined by thy grace to be more faithful and diligent this year than they have ever been in the past. If there are any who have not done well, Lord, be gracious to them and help them to do better next year. If there are any teachers whose pupils have disappointed them, help them to remember that God holds us responsible for faithfulness, not for results. And, Lord, grant that in that great Promotion Day that will come to us all by and by, when we shall leave our classes here forever, not one of us shall fail of promotion, but everyone of us shall be called to go up higher. All we ask in Jesus' name.

Our Father, etc.

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